

Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda May 16, 2017

Attendance: Peter Driscoll, Doug Lechliden, David Weitzer, Dennis Kamber, Linda Lewis, Eleanor Leak, Paula Linthicum

Staff: Josh Penn, Jeremy Criss

Guests: Jane Evans

1. Meeting called to Order and Introductions. **Meeting came to order at 7:20 and introductions were not needed.**
2. Approval of the March 15, 2017 AAC meeting minutes. There was no meeting in April. Approved as written Lechliden/ Linthicum
3. The County Council recommended approval last week on the FY18 Operating Budget for OAG. No additional funding was allocated for FY18. All adjustments are planned for FY19. Click on the link below to access the OAG Budget packet.
http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&event_id=5023&meta_id=137958

Criss reviewed some of the challenges for the OAG budget surrounding the Motor Pool line item that was zeroed out and will start July 1, 2017 with - \$1,281.

4. During the PHED Committee work session on April 26, 2017, I discussed the \$50,000 study for Agritourism (*See Summary Below*) that the Planning Board is proposing. The OAG web site shows how many farms are already conducting Agritourism and Agricultural Education events on their farms as approved by the County Department of Permitting Services-DPS. I explained how the AAC subcommittee conducted four meetings in calendar year 2015 and the recommendations were not submitted to the Full AAC. In calendar year 2016, the DPS started to approve several farms for Agritourism and Agricultural Education events and this was the primary reason the AAC subcommittee was discontinued. I told the PHED Committee how the MNCPPC study will most likely propose ways to limit ag education and ag tourism events on farms from what DPS is currently approving.

April 24, 2017 PHED Committee Work Session on MNCPPC Budget Agri-Tourism Study - \$50,000. This study land use and zoning strategies that would address common issues affecting agri-tourism, breweries, micro-distilleries, culinary tourism and the farm-to-table movement. The study would recommend strategic solutions rather than relying on ad hoc zoning text amendments to address the land use issues created by these uses. Stakeholder involvement from Visit Montgomery, the Office of Agriculture, MCEDC, and other organizations will be critical to the success of the project.

Criss reviewed the meeting on February 27, 2017 meeting in the DPS office where MCA staff and OAG staff discussed with DPS staff ways to promote agritourism on the DPS website as part of their recipes for success model. Josh Penn discussed the upcoming agritourism study that MNCPPC will be conducting as part of the FY18 Operating Budget. Josh said the study was proposed during the same time the AAC subcommittee was meeting with stakeholders from the agricultural and civic communities. Josh believes the study will enhance what is currently being approved by the DPS. The Study will consider signage, Rustic Roads, safety checklist for parking and infrastructure needs to conduct agritourism events on farms. Josh said they will look at ways to promote economic development without jeopardizing the open space and rural character of the Agricultural Reserve. Josh said they have received twenty phone calls complaining about the Joy Siegel Property at 19124 Jerusalem Road where the DPS has approved outside farm weddings. Eleanor Leak asked if a property owner can use their property for a family wedding and Criss said absolutely. Dennis Kamber said there was a real opportunity to develop reality show for real farmers in Montgomery County. Josh said that MNCPPC would be developing an advisory committee of stakeholders and a meeting is pending. Paula Linthicum said she is concerned that someone will purchase a farm and not be involved with farming and they will start a farm wedding business that will become the primary use of the farm. Criss said the Zoning Code only allows the DPS the ability to approve accessory, subordinate, ancillary uses for agricultural education and agricultural tourism.

5. The Office of Human Resources and the Office of Management and Budget have approved the reclassification of the vacant MSCD manager to a Management Leadership Series MIII position. The OAG will be working with OHR on the announcement to fill this vacant position as soon as possible.
6. Both House Bills to help reduce deer herds in the County were passed. The AAC has forwarded letters of thanks to the each of the Delegates and Senators that spearheaded these bills. The OAG met with the Deer Management Work Group to begin promoting the new deer hunting regulations associated with the HB 310-Sunday Hunting and HB 313-Archery Safety Zone Deer Hunting Bills for MC.

Criss said the Paula Linthicum did an excellent job representing the County Farm Bureau and Bob Cissel did an excellent job of representing the Montgomery Agricultural Producers.

7. Both Memorandum of Understandings MOUs with the University of Maryland-Extension and the Montgomery Soil Conservation District have been approved. These MOUs will help everyone to understand how these agencies work with the County OAG including the financial resources and deliverables for all parties.
8. The Urban Agricultural Tax Credit applications for eligibility will be submitted by September 1, 2017 for this year only. In the future, the applications must be submitted by April 1st of each year. One application is pending so far.

9. We are still waiting for the Council to finish and approve of the FY18 budget so they can focus on other issues like the ZTA 16-02 regarding AR Zone-TDR requirements for Dwellings accessory to farming like Farm Tenant Dwellings. We are still waiting to see if the ZTA will be assigned a new number and start the public process over.

Josh Penn said that Greg Russ and Jeff Zyontz met earlier today to discuss the ZTA. They are still trying to determine where will the public process begin with the ZTA 16-02 that has been amended extensively from the original ZTA that was introduced on January 19, 2016. They are still trying to determine if the public process will take place in Silver Spring or Rockville. The agricultural groups are still in agreement with the December 6, 2016 Public Draft ZTA 16-02 that Josh Penn distributed.

10. On May 2, 2017, the OAG took the members of the Montgomery County Food Council, Visit Montgomery, and DPS staff on a tour of four farms. See the attached program that was handed out. The OAG proposes to conduct three to four farm tours annually where different types of farms will be chosen. Tours of farms will help to educate the public on the good conservation work that farmers are doing as well as provide opportunities to further promote the Ag Reserve. If you are interested in showing your farm to the public, please let us know. The OAG reserved a 45-foot Ride-On-Bus to accommodate the guests.

11. John Z and I will have met with the attorneys from (Whiteford, Taylor and Preston) handling the legal challenge that Pulte Homes filed against the County Government for Ten Mile Creek amendments to the Clarksburg Master Plan.

Criss reviewed the history surrounding the 1995 and 2014 Clarksburg Master Plan updates and how the decisions impacted the properties west of Route 121 and within Ten Mile Creek watershed. Pulte acquired the TDRs to construct approximately 900 units on 600 acres and then the TDR receiving zone was taken away. Pulte filed legal suit in court for financial damages surrounding the TDRS they purchased and now cannot use on the property. Linda Lewis asked if Pulte can use the TDRs somewhere else or sell the TDRs to another developer and Criss responded absolutely.

12. New Appointments to serve on the AAC-See Attached summary

Criss said there were 9 vacancies on the AAC and the deadline to apply is May 1, 2017. All three non-farmers serve in one year terms and are eligible to request another term. The remaining farmer members are as follows:

Ben Allnutt - Served two terms

Linda Lewis- Served two terms

Michele Cropp- Served one term and eligible for second term

Doug Lechliden- Served on term and eligible for second term

Drew Stabler-
David Heisler-

Second term expired last year and need to find replacement
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13. 2017 Farmers Markets in Montgomery County.

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices/Resources/Files/Farmers_Markets/2017farmersmarketflyerDRAFT.pdf

14. The OAG is working on the 2017 Farm Tour for July 22 & 23, 2017. We have 17 farms on the Farm Tour this year as compared to 21 farms last year. We are also working on a new marketing initiative to cosponsor with Visit Montgomery, a Self-Guided Farm Tour throughout the growing season for farms that are normally open to the public during the months April through November.

15. Next Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting-June 20, 2017 @ 7:00pm.

16. Other Business

Doug Lechlinder said the court case surrounding the County's Pesticide law Bill 52-14 is being heard in Circuit Court tomorrow.

Linda Lewis asked about the report that farm bureau staff Colby Ferguson discussed at the Farm Bureau meeting that showed Montgomery with the lowest rate in the State 57% for farmers filing Annual Implementation Reports associated with Nutrient Management Plans. Criss said the report also showed how the Montgomery reported updated Nutrient Management Plans for 2014 covered most of the agricultural acres in the County that is reported to the Ag Census. The problem is that farmers need to also file annual implement reports and only half of the farmers are doing this.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

MARBIDCO-UM-Ext Upper Southern MD Ag Business Providers Forum-May 10, 2017
Agricultural Advisory Committee-Tuesday May 16, 2017 @ 7:00pm

UM-Extension-Volunteer Recognition Dinner-May 17, 2017

Montgomery Soil Conservation Bd of Supervisors-May 19, 2017 @ 9:00am-**rescheduled**

Stakeholder Gathering-Advance Composting in Frederick Co. May 22, 2017

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Picnic-June 4, 2017 @

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors-June 6, 2017 @ 7:00pm

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-June __, 2017 @ 7:00pm-**rescheduled**

Agricultural Advisory Committee-Tuesday June 20, 2017 @ 7:00pm

Montgomery Soil Conservation Bd of Supervisors-June 23, 2017 @ 9:00am-**rescheduled**